

Exotic Fruits and Vegetables

August—Mango

- **Fun fact:** Mangoes were first grown in India more than 5,000 years ago. In India, giving someone a basket of mangoes is considered a gesture of friendship. A mango tree can grow as tall as 100 feet.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Did you know mangoes are really healthy? They are called a superfood because they have more than 20 vitamins.
 - Grades 3–4: Mangoes are called a superfood because they have more than 20 vitamins, like vitamin C, which help our bodies fight off illnesses.
 - Grades 5–6: Mangoes are called a superfood because they have more than 20 vitamins, like vitamin C, which help our bodies fight off illnesses. Mangoes also have plenty of fiber, which keeps us feeling full and keeps our stomachs healthy.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Try eating different types of fruit, like mangoes, to give your body more vitamins. Mangoes are the pretty yellow, green, and red fruits shaped like ovals that you see in the grocery store.
 - Grades K–6: Try eating different types of fruit, like mangoes, to give your body more vitamins. Mangoes are delicious in smoothies or just cut up for a snack.

September—Okra

- **Fun fact:** Okra is also known in some countries as ladies' fingers. Okra that is too ripe to eat is used to make rope and paper. Did you know you can also eat the leaf of an okra plant?
 - Potential class activity—recycling old okra.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Okra may seem slimy and sticky, but it's supposed to be. It is full of vitamins and even contains a little protein, which helps our bodies build strong muscles.
 - Grades 3–4: Okra may seem slimy and sticky, but it's supposed to be. It is full of vitamins and even contains a little protein, which helps our bodies build strong muscles. One serving contains almost half of the daily goal for vitamin C, which helps fight off colds and other illnesses.
 - Grades 5–6: Researchers have found that eating okra can help prevent chronic diseases later in life that may lead to cancer. It also helps our eye sight and heart health.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Okra is a perfect snack. At home, try eating okra raw, pickled, or in soup.
 - Grades K–6: Okra is a perfect snack that is naturally healthy and low in fat. At home, try eating okra raw, pickled, or in a soup.

October—Butternut Squash

- **Serving suggestion:** Potentially buy pre-cut cubes or sticks. Serve with some type of low-fat yogurt dip.
- **Fun fact:** Butternut squash is in the pumpkin family. You can also eat the seeds of a butternut squash.
 - Potential class activity: drying out the seeds in the windowsill and eating them as snacks.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Even though it's a squash, butternut squash is actually a sweet vegetable. It is colorful, tasty, and nutritious.
 - Grades 3–4: Butternut squash provides fiber, making it a very heart-friendly food choice. It also provides potassium, which is important for bone health.
 - Grades 5–6: Butternut squash is kind of like a pumpkin, but it contains more vitamins and minerals. It contains more vitamin A than a pumpkin, which helps keep our eyes and skin healthy.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Butternut squash can be a substitute for potatoes. Try making mashed butternut squash or butternut squash hash browns with your parents at home. You can eat the skin, the flesh, and the seeds.
 - Grades K–6: Butternut squash can be a substitute for potatoes. Try making mashed butternut squash or butternut squash hash browns with your parents at home. Butternut squash is yellow and oddly shaped, but it is sweeter when it is darker orange.

November—Kiwi

- **Fun fact:** Kiwifruit is the actual name for a kiwi. It was initially known as a “Chinese gooseberry,” and the people of New Zealand renamed it to kiwifruit because it looked like a type of bird that is also called kiwi.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Kiwi has tons of vitamin C, a vitamin that helps us fight off colds and other illnesses.
 - Grades 3–4: Kiwi has tons of vitamin C, a vitamin that helps us fight off colds and other illnesses. It contains more vitamin C than an orange.
 - Grades 5–6: When you cut up a kiwi, you see the little black seeds. These seeds are where all of the fiber of a kiwi is found. Fiber keeps our heart healthy and keeps us feeling full.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Kiwis are small fruits that have a lot of flavor and plenty of health benefits. Kiwis taste great when blended with orange juice and frozen into mini popsicles.
 - Grades K–6: Kiwis are small fruits that have a lot of flavor and plenty of health benefits. Their green flesh is sweet and tangy. Kiwis taste great when blended with orange juice and frozen into mini popsicles.

December—Avocado

- **Serving suggestion:** Serve with strawberries or cherries for red and green at Christmastime.
- **Fun fact:** The restaurant Chipotle goes through 97,000 pounds of avocados per day to make their guacamole. Avocados used to be called alligator pears because of their bumpy black skin.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Avocados have the most fat of any fruit or vegetable, but it is a good fat that gives us energy to learn and play all day.
 - Grades 3–4: Avocados have the most fat of any fruit or vegetable, but it is a good fat that gives us energy. Good fats also keep our hearts healthy.
 - Grades 5–6: Eating avocados has been shown to lower risk of heart disease.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Avocado is delicious by itself but is easy to eat in other ways. Try guacamole, which is made from avocados. Try putting avocado slices on your sandwiches or on your toast at home.
 - Grades K–6: Avocado is delicious by itself but is easy to eat in other ways. Try guacamole, which is made from avocados. Try putting avocado slices on your sandwiches or on your toast at home.

January—Blood Orange

- **Fun fact:** In ancient Greece, blood oranges were prized foods from the gods and were called golden apples. They were also a prized fruit of Chinese emperors, because in one form of the Chinese language, the word “blood orange” means gold. Blood oranges were also given as presents in England during Queen Victoria’s reign.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Blood oranges are a type of orange that is dark red inside and has different types of vitamins. It has a sweet flavor that might remind you of raspberries.
 - Grades 3–4: Blood oranges are a type of orange that is dark red inside and has special properties that can help prevent cancer. It has a sweet flavor that might remind you of raspberries.
 - Grades 5–6: Blood oranges are a type of orange that is dark red inside and has special properties that can help prevent cancer and aging symptoms. It has a sweet flavor that might remind you of raspberries.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Blood oranges are in season December–May. You can find them in the regular grocery store in the fruit section—be sure to read the labels because they look like regular oranges from the outside.
 - Grades K–6: Blood oranges are in season December–May. You can find them in the regular grocery store in the fruit section. The delicious flavor is stronger than a regular orange.

February—Snow Peas with Pineapple

- **Serving suggestion:** with pineapple chunks.
- **Fun fact:** Snow peas are also called snap peas. Why are they called snow peas? Some say it's because they appear white like snow if the light reflects a certain way off their pods. Most say it's because they can grow in the winter and survive through ice.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Snow peas aren't like regular peas. You can eat them as a snack while they are still in their pod.
 - Grades 3–4: Peas are a vegetarian form of protein, which means they don't come from an animal. Protein helps our bodies function and build strong muscles.
 - Grades 5–6: Peas are a vegetarian form of protein. There are 3 grams of protein in a 1-cup serving. Protein helps our bodies function and build strong muscles. The pod is edible and contains fiber.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Snow peas should be shiny and flat, with the peas visible through their skin. To eat, break the tip off and eat the seeds or the seeds and the pod.
 - Grades K–6: One cup of snow peas contains as much vitamin C as two large apples and more fiber than a slice of whole grain bread.

March—Asparagus

- **Serving suggestion:** with veggie dip.
- **Fun fact:** There is green, white, and purple asparagus. White asparagus is white because it is grown underground and never sees sunlight; therefore, it cannot go through photosynthesis, so it never turns green. Asparagus used to be used for prevention of bee stings and relief of toothaches.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Asparagus is very healthy because it is loaded with nutrients.
 - Grades 3–4: Asparagus is very healthy because it is loaded with nutrients. Asparagus tastes best when it is in season, which is February–June.
 - Grades 5–6: Asparagus has lots of vitamins, including calcium, folate, and vitamin K. Calcium helps our bones and teeth grow strong. Folate and vitamin K help blood flow in our bodies.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Asparagus is a brain booster. This anti-aging vegetable might help prevent memory problems later in life.
 - Grades K–6: Asparagus is a brain booster. This anti-aging vegetable helps prevent brain dysfunction. Folate, also found in other leafy greens, works with vitamin B12 to prevent memory problems later in life.

April—Star Fruit

- **Fun fact:** Star fruit forms a perfect star when cut cross-wise. Star fruit comes in two varieties: tart and sweet.
 - Potential class activity: show how fruits change color as they ripen:



- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Star fruit is yellow and green, tastes a little like pineapples and lemons, and might feel like a grape when you chew it.
 - Grades 3–4: Star fruit is low in sugar and has a lot of vitamin C, a good vitamin for helping fight off colds and other illnesses.
 - Grades 5–6: Star fruit is low in sugar and has a lot of vitamin C, a good vitamin for helping fight off colds and other illnesses.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: There’s no need to peel a star fruit before eating; just cut off any brown edges and enjoy.
 - Grades K–6: Star fruit grows on trees. They taste best shortly after they ripen, when they are yellow and most of the green has disappeared, kind of like a banana.

May—Yellow Pear Cherry Tomato

- **Fun fact:** The Yellow Pear is a delicious cherry tomato that is shaped like a teardrop and is a bright yellow color.
- **Nutrition blurb**
 - Grades K–2: Yellow Pear tomatoes have a lot of water content. Eating them will help us reach our daily water goal and keep us hydrated.
 - Grades 3–4: Yellow Pear tomatoes contain potassium, which is a mineral that helps our muscles work.
 - Grades 5–6: Yellow Pear tomatoes have more niacin and folate than other tomatoes. Niacin can help high cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart attack. Folate helps our blood flow.
- **PA announcement**
 - Grades K–3: Yellow Pear tomatoes have a lot of water content. Eating them will help us reach our daily water goal and keep us hydrated so we can learn and play all day.
 - Grades K–6: Yellow tomatoes are low in acidity, so they won’t be as tart as red tomatoes.